

Sandburg Elementary School
Waterford, MI



Waterford Sandburg Elementary School was the recipient of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield “Building Healthy Communities” grant and implemented Team Nutrition to promote the grant. We kicked off our Nutrition Mission with a Rainbow Journey focused on a world of fruits. The journey began with a puppet show presented by our students, our Food & Nutritional Department and MSU extension. Volunteers from the Waterford Senior Center joined the family and became fast friends by making our student body aware that they are all stars in our eyes when they doled out Star Fruit to every child. To the children’s delight, the fruit was delivered from our Rainbow Trolley which was designed by our high school students. Our children were treated to a fun-filled and informative overview of the importance of balancing their diet with healthy and colorful choices. Each student received a “How Much Do You Eat” handout along with a Rainbow Trolley Survey to help us determine the amount of fruits they eat daily.



The journey continues weekly via our “Fruity Fridays” program that allows our students to receive free fruit during their snack time along with nutritional awareness handouts from the Team Nutrition activity book, family friendly fruit recipes, and monthly calendars that promote good eating and fitness. Our friends from the Senior Center join us weekly to share the fruit and the fun as we all learn and grow together.



During March National Reading Month, our friends from the Senior Center held a Read-In for the students featuring “Ferdinand’s Fruitastic Field Trip”, an activity/storybook book written for our Sandburg children. Our friends enthralled the children with the photos from the book of exotic fruits from the four corners of the earth as they read them the story and then gifted each child with a copy of the book.



Our student’s from Sandburg were able to share their appreciation and the knowledge that they have gleaned throughout the school year during an event they hosted for the Waterford Senior Center. The event was an Exotic Fruit Fest featuring twenty-five varieties of fruits from all over the world such as Cherimoya from Mexico, Blood Oranges from Mexico and Rambutan from China. The students shared interesting facts, nutritional values and the health benefits of the fruits and everyone enjoyed sampling the sweet display. The highlight of the event was the “Cutting of the Durian” and most of the guests were brave enough to sample the “Stinky Fruit”.



In May the students were treated to taste test of veggies with a healthy dip and dried figs. Robin Danto, a dietician from the Michigan Extension shared the importance of fruits and vegetables. She encouraged the children to try new varieties with fun and tasty ideas on how to make these essential foods a part of their daily eating.



The children will learn how to make fruit smoothies in the month of June. One of our community sponsors, Tropical Smoothie Café, with the aid of our friends from the Senior Center, will demonstrate the simple and fun method of making smoothies at home. All of our students will be given a Tropical Smoothie donated by the Café at the end of the session along with smoothie recipes.

Our Team Nutrition Journey has bore great fruit and our families are reaping the healthy benefits. Our teachers and parents have shared with us that the children are not only changing their eating habits, they are all smiling about it. Here is a quote from one of the letters written by a teacher: **“Not only has it been nutritional for them, it has also turned them into fruit lovers. I use to see many poor choices coming in for snack...now I see at least 90% of the class bringing in fruit. It is now the “cool” snack to bring in!”**

